

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a distinctive mechanism within the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) that evaluates the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. Examples of UN Member States are: the United States, Canada, Viet Nam, France, Ghana, India, among others. The UPR is a state-driven process that occurs every 4.5 years, providing each state the opportunity to showcase the actions they've taken to increase human rights within their borders and fulfill their human rights obligations. The goal of the UPR is to strengthen the human rights situation globally and address human rights violations wherever they occur.

The UPR process is based on three primary documents:

1. **The National Report:** Prepared by the State under review.
2. **The UN Compilation:** This report is prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
3. **The Summary of Stakeholders' Submissions:** Also prepared by the OHCHR, this report summarizes information submitted by National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), civil society organizations, and regional human rights structures. The United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada are examples of civil society organizations that are religious.

The UPR process involves several key phases:

4. **Pre-Review:** This phase involves the preparation of the three key documents mentioned above.
5. **Review:** The review takes place during a session of the UPR Working Group, which consists of all 47 members of the Human Rights Council.

6. **Post-Review:** The State under review then has the opportunity to express its position on each recommendation, either supporting or noting it.
7. **Adoption:** The UPR outcomes are formally adopted by the Human Rights Council during its plenary session.
8. **Implementation:** The State under review is expected to implement the accepted recommendations.
9. **Mid-term Review:** States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term report halfway through the cycle, outlining the progress made in implementing the recommendations.

The UPR is a unique process that allows for the participation of various stakeholders, including civil society organizations. These organizations can submit written contributions, make oral statements during the Human Rights Council sessions, and submit mid-term reports. The UPR provides a platform for civil society to engage with the UN and advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights globally.

For further information on the UPR process and civil society engagement, please refer to the following resources:

- **OHCHR UPR webpage:** <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>
- **OHCHR UPR webpage for NGOs and NHRIs:**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>

The UPR is a powerful tool for promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. By actively participating in the UPR process, civil society can contribute to positive change and ensure that the human rights of all individuals are respected and upheld.